

For Immediate Release

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**EPA AND MDEQ TO HOST MEETINGS TO INFORM PUBLIC ON CLEANUP
PROGRESS AT FORMER WOOD TREATING FACILITY**

PICAYUNE, Miss., October 29, 2004—The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) will host two meetings at the Pleasant Valley Baptist Church to provide Picayune citizens with updated information and to answer questions regarding the cleanup of the former wood treating facility in Picayune, Wood Treating, Inc.

A public availability session will be held on Thursday, November 4 from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. During this session residents may talk one-on-one with officials knowledgeable about the cleanup.

A public meeting will be conducted by state and federal officials later the same day from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Speakers from state and federal agencies will present the latest information regarding the cleanup and follow-up information from the last public meeting conducted in April 2004.

All sessions will be held at the Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, 501 Weems Street, Picayune, MS.

“MDEQ and EPA are working collaboratively to keep the citizens of Picayune informed

–more–

ADD ONE
EPA AND MDEQ TO HOST MEETINGS

on what has been done, what is being done, and what is planned for the assessment and remediation of the contaminants at the Superfund site in Picayune,” said Jerry Banks, Division Chief of the Groundwater, Assessment, and Remediation Branch at MDEQ.

The wood treating site, owned by Wood Treating, Inc., was operational until 1999. MDEQ and EPA regulated the facility under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) from 1981 to 1999. Several enforcement actions were taken against the facility during that time.

Groundwater testing directed by MDEQ and EPA has revealed shallow groundwater contamination at the site. However a large layer of clay (100-300 feet thick) between the groundwater contamination and the drinking water supply acts as a confining unit to keep contaminants from reaching the deeper drinking water aquifer. A plan to treat groundwater was implemented in 1996 and continued until 1999 when Wood Treating, Inc. closed its business. EPA will continue to evaluate groundwater contamination. MDEQ tested Picayune’s drinking water in February 2004 and no wood treating chemicals were found in the samples.

“We will continue to sample and test soil and groundwater near the site to ensure the safety of the citizens and to determine the scope of the contamination,” said Humberto Guzman, Remedial Project Manager, with Region 4 EPA.

The Wood Treating, Inc. facility became a federal Superfund site on July 22, 2004. As a Superfund site, the federal government is responsible for 90 percent of the cleanup and the state of Mississippi 10 percent.

Reports and documents pertaining to the site may be viewed at the Margaret Reed Crosby Memorial Library, 900 Goodyear Blvd., Picayune, MS.

ADD TWO
EPA AND MDEQ TO HOST MEETINGS

For more information regarding the upcoming meetings, please call Tiki Whitfield at 404-562-8530 or Gloria Tatum at 601-961-5011.

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